



## **STORMWATER DRAINAGE SYSTEM SERVICE CHARGE (FAQ)**

### **General Information:**

As Broken Arrow continues to grow, more of our city which used to be open fields, wooded areas and agricultural sites is now covered by homes, businesses, roads, and parking lots. Those areas which at one time soaked up water from rains and snows now force that stormwater to find a creek, ditch, pond or a sewer line. Increases in impervious areas from development pose greater challenges to stormwater quality, stormwater maintenance, and floodplain management. On April 15, 2002, the Broken Arrow City Council passed an ordinance creating the new Stormwater Drainage System Service Charge for the purpose of providing a reliable, equitable, and efficient funding source for the City of Broken Arrow Stormwater Management Program. The system service charge became effective May 1, 2002, to all properties within the City Limits.

The service charge is based on the amount of impervious surface (a surface which water cannot penetrate) on each property within the Broken Arrow City limits. All single-family residential homes will pay a service charge of \$3 per month. Non-residential properties will be charged based upon the total impervious area on the property. Details of the residential and non-residential charge and billing are listed as follows:

### **Single-family residential properties billing:**

The new ordinance establishes a stormwater drainage system service charge of \$3 per month per equivalent service unit. All single-family residential homes within the City limits of Broken Arrow will be assessed 1 equivalent service unit, and billed \$3 per month. The charge will show up on your utility bill for residents already receiving City water, sanitary, or solid waste services. A separate bill will be created for properties not currently receiving a bill for other City services.

### **Non-single family residential properties billing:**

Apartments, businesses, and industrial sites are examples of non-single family residential properties. These properties have been evaluated to determine the actual amount of impervious surface on the property. Aerial photography maps were used for impervious area determinations, with site investigations performed where necessary. Each property has been assessed 1 equivalent service unit, per month, for each 2,650 square feet of impervious surface area on the property. All developed properties with impervious area will be charged a minimum of 1 equivalent service unit per month.

## **FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS**

### **What is a stormwater drainage system service charge?**

The stormwater service charge is a monthly charge applicable to all properties which contribute excess runoff to the stormwater drainage system. The service charge is to stormwater like a sewer charge is to sewage, and a water charge is to drinking water. It is a utility responsible for funding the management, construction, operation, and maintenance of the stormwater drainage system. That includes inlets, storm sewers, borrow ditches, detention facilities and floodplains. A stormwater utility generates revenue through user fees, which are based upon the amount of stormwater runoff a particular property passes to the stormwater drainage system. The more runoff a property contributes, the greater the charge.

### **Why does the City of Broken Arrow need a stormwater drainage system service charge?**

Previously there were no funds for maintenance of stormwater facilities. However, mandates from the Environmental Protection Agency in the area of stormwater are causing the need for a continues funding program for maintenance of the stormwater system. Broken Arrow has to start meeting EPA regulations on stormwater in March of 2003. This includes not only management of the stormwater, but an expensive testing program each time stormwater enters or leaves the city limits. This will help monitor any toxic or damaging chemicals or materials in our stormwater. A utility provides the most reliable and efficient funding source needed to implement and maintain stormwater improvements, including detention facilities, floodplain maintenance, erosion control and required water quality programs.

### **What will the charges be used for?**

The following list is an example the types of projects targeted by the stormwater management program.

- Creek and floodplain maintenance.
- Borrow and drainage ditch clearing, re-grading and maintenance.
- Storm sewer system cleaning, maintenance, and repair.
- Construction of new storm sewers.
- Maintenance and repair of streets to reduce areas of standing water.
- Creek erosion control projects.
- Regional detention ponds that will also be used for recreational purposes.
- Flood reduction programs.
- Improved stormwater quality programs.
- Required testing of stormwater as it enters and leaves the city limits.

### **Are other communities implementing stormwater drainage system service charges also?**

Yes. Hundreds of communities nationwide are currently using stormwater utility fees as a method of funding stormwater programs. Currently the City of Tulsa charges a \$3.38 per month stormwater utility fee.

**Is this another tax?**

No. This is a stormwater drainage system utility fee set up to pay for the utility services provided by the City of Broken Arrow in relation to the stormwater system.

**How was the charge determined?**

The \$3 per month charge for 2,650 square footage of impervious area is based on the average impervious area of homes within the Broken Arrow region. The \$3 per month per ESU charge was calculated after study of the costs of services necessary for the City of Broken Arrow Stormwater Management Program.

**What is an impervious surface?**

An impervious surface is generally one that retards the entry of rainwater into the soil under natural conditions, causing water to run off the surface in an increased rate of flow than was present under natural conditions. Examples include, but are not limited to, rooftops of homes, businesses and other structures, asphalt or concrete sidewalks, driveways, roads, and parking lots, storage areas, and gravel areas.

**As a commercial property owner, whom do I call if I think there is an error in the charge to my property?**

Call the City of Broken Arrow Stormwater Management Department at (918) 259-8284.

**Why are churches and other tax-exempt properties charged?**

The stormwater drainage system service charge is based on how much the property contributes to the amount of stormwater runoff to the stormwater drainage system. The fee is service charge and not a tax. Properties with impervious areas must make an equitable contribution to the stormwater system maintenance.

**What happens if I don't pay my bill?**

If you currently receive City water, sanitary, or solid waste disposal, you risk having these services stopped for delinquent payment. In addition, the City could place a lien against your property or file civil charges to collect.

**I live in a duplex, what will I be charged?**

Each dwelling unit (side) of the duplex (through a quad plex) will be charged \$3 per month.

**If I don't have any drainage problems near my property and my property drains directly to the creek, why do I have to pay?**

There may not be a specific stormwater drainage problem in your area or neighborhood, but the runoff from your property does contribute to the City's overall stormwater drainage system. This includes floodplain areas within the Haikey Creek, Broken Arrow

Creek, Arkansas River Tributaries, and Adams Creek drainage basins. Floodplain maintenance, multi-use detention facilities, major bridges and culverts on arterial roads, and improved water quality within the creeks are examples of portions of the program which affect all citizens.

**Hasn't the City always had creeks and storm sewers to maintain? Why are we being charged now?**

Yes, the City has had storm sewers for a long time. However, federal regulations that require a more stringent comprehensive approach to stormwater management will become effective in March of 2003 for the City of Broken Arrow and cities and towns throughout our nation. The stormwater drainage system service charge will enable the city to meet state and federal requirements on stormwater quality and to meet the responsibilities to manage the stormwater drainage system more closely, study the contents of the stormwater, seek out and eliminate illicit connections and illegal dumping, enforce codes more strictly, and educate the public on floodplain and stormwater issues.

**Will the City fix drainage problems that are on my property now?**

The City cannot legally perform maintenance or work on areas within private property. Private drainage problems between adjacent private property owners will still be the responsibility of the property owners

**My neighborhood has drainage problems. Whom do I call to report them?**

Call the City of Broken Arrow Citizens Action Center at 258-3587 or the Stormwater Management Department at 259-8284. The City will keep track of problem areas reported, and maintenance or repair will prioritized based on factors such as threat to public safety, benefit-cost ratio, and funds available.